The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

In a Garden

Last week was a fine week to plant the garden, that is, if your back lawn is in the least worthy of the name. There was a very ingratiating creature rejoicing in the name of Lazarus, who seemed to be digging in everybody's yard on the square. Pleasantly and patiently he dug and planted in your square foot of real estate for some two hours, only to remember that he had sworn solemn oaths yesterday to be with Mrs. So, and-So at just this time. You rushed into the pantry or the linen press or the sideboard, wherever the liquor was, and poured the old man a seasonable tonic. Do you know the perfidious old wretch actually left your garden half dug and went to weed the beds next door under your very eyes!

Such it is to deal with a gardener. Not only is whiskey his only thought and the cherished ideal of his dreams, he knows nothing of flowers. The hollyhocks that were only yesterday the most flourishing bit of green in the neighborhood have been spaded entirely out of sight; all of the weeds are present with you and your most cherished slips strew the walks.

"It is a splendid horse-chesnut tree," mourned the lady of the garden, "but I don't think I need one just here by the roses."

And the nonchalance of the darkey, who would have you believe that it is the very image of a foreign shrub in Monroe Park, and not a tree at all! His confidance in himself knows no bounds. He is the people and wisdom will die with him, and it is simply beyond the power of a human being to reduce his estimate of what he can do. At last the garden is finished. The fig bushes died this winter, so one has run vines of wall beside their multilated trunks and planted yellow flowers where you intended to grow popples. The lilacs have gone and the hyacinths never bloomed at all, but there is a flourishing crop of morning glory vines, and down in one corner, all by themselves, are coming up some spicy little pinks. I am sure it will be a nice garden.

These days some people I know are quite busy digging in the fertile plains of thought and soul, and strange to say there are a great many thoughts there, too, that have never come up at all. Perhaps, you are digging too much; perhaps you forgot to plant the popple seed of dreams and the worthless morning glories are already there, only waiting for space to push in. Some people have come upon dead sorrows and old despairs with mold upon their shrouds and there is no light. In somebody else's soul are light laughs and priceless loves with soft kisses on the dear, warm mouth of a soul their own; in a small corner, coming up all by itself is love of people, belief in people and the half-finished song of happiness. Gardens and souls are they so very different after all?

BRENT WITT.

Dinner Competition.

Among the royal princes of Europe, Prince Alexander of Teck, is one of the cleverest, and perhaps the most original. He is the youngest brother of Queen Mary, and married Princess Alice of Albany when they were both quite young. It was purely a love match, and the prince is ably seconded by his charming wife in carrying out his novel ideas.

At the recent ideal horse exhibition in London the prince organized a dinner table competition and invited all the noted hostesses to decorate tables after their own ideas. The great one responded with alacrity, and a wonderful exhibition of original "spreads" was the result, each table expressing the individual taste of a well-known hostess. The flowers alone and the methods of arranging them were a feature of the exhibition.

Princess Alexander of Teck invented a very dainty scheme, in which a wonderful service of old Dresden china played an important part. The Duchess of Northumberland used old cut glass, and a celadon dessert service. The Duchess of Rutland had a bright idea.

Her table represented a hunting scene, in which were figures of huntsmen, horses, and hounds in full cry across country. A Japanese garden was the Countess of Darnley's notion; it was carried out correctly to the smallest detail, with streams, rocks, lakes, a tiny temple, and many dwarf plants. The Hon. Frances Garnet, daughter of Field Marshal Lord Wolseley, showed six feet of an Italian terrace garden. Lady Arthur Hill confined herself to rare old Leeds ware, her flowers being light and dark blue Spanish iris.

The best table of all was that of Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild, simpler by far than other, but certainly more distinguished and dignified. Everything—napery, glass, china, silver, and appointments—was absolutely plain, with no decorations whatever; the flowers few and arranged low so as not to interrupt the conversation across the table. The effect was similar to that of the American Ambassador at court in plain evening dress, says a spectator, as contrasted with the gorgeous uniforms with stars, medals, and crosses of diplomatists from other lands. He is always the most distinguishd looking person there just on account of his simplicity. So it is with Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild's dinner table.—Exchange.

A Court Poet.

The institution of court poet is a very old one. It can be traced back to Greece, from which the custom was adopted by Rome. The title "poet laureate," so far as can be learned, was devised by Frederick I., of Germany, who bestowed it, with a wreath of bay leaves, upon the monk Gunther.

From the time of Petrarch, who was crowned at Rome, the title because for some centuries an honorary degree which the universities of the Continent and of England were authorized to confer. We may suppose that the favor was sometimes unworthily granted, for Sancho Panza, in consoling his ass, when both ass and rider had fallen into a ditch, exclaimed:

"I promise to give thee a double feed and to place a crown of laurel on thy head, that thou mayest look like a poet laureate."

It is only though tradition that there may be assigned an origin to this office in England. In the deed that conferred upon Chaucer and his successor in the post an annuity and the yearly allowance of a tierce (40) gallons) of sweet Malvoisie wine the king named the father of English literature as "My valet, Geoffrey Chaucer." The monarch made na illusian to his "valet's" poetic genius.

TAILORED COSTUMES IN SERGE, PONGEE AND LINEN. L'Art de la Mode.

ARTISTIC MOLDS FOR FOOD

Half the pleasure of eating is through the eye. If food is well served and cooked, a meal is a success, though the quantity and variety of the food may be limited.

Molds play a large part in this dainty service. Everything, from fish to dessert, can be molded. Even the soup might be, if it happens to be jellied consomme, and new shapes are constantly brought out.

The ordinary mold is of heavy tin, but the woman who objects to using tin, especially for acids, can buy earthenware or aluminum. These last two cost more, and in them, there are fewer shapes.

Various sizes can be had, from a quart to many quarts. The very large ones are made to order. Individual molds are also popular, though the large ring or form shapes are more convenient and more fashionable for general use.

Probably the favorite mold for most purposes is a hollow ring, round or oval. The round ones are better liked, but either shape is good. These come with a lid for desserts that must be frozen, and without one for aspices, mousses, blanc manges and vegetables.

With one of these ring molds the clever hostess can even glorify hash or vegetable left-overs. Macaroni made into a timbale and put in a ring with the centre filled with creamed chicken, lamb or fish, makes an appetizing luncheon dish.

Mashed potatoes may be quickly formed into a hollow ring with one of these molds, the centre being filled with lamb chops, creamed sweetbreads or fried chicken.

For Salads and Desserts.

For salads and desserts the ring mold is invaluable. For the former an aspic is usually made, plain or vegetable, and the centre is filled with any desired mixture in fruit salad, or with a meat or fish salad, or even mayonnaised celery or shredded lettuce with a sour cream dressing.

An attractive salad is made by using two sizes of oval or round molds that fit into each other. In the outer and larger one is put a white chicken aspic, and in the inner one a tomato aspic. The centre is filled with cubes of grape fruit, apple and maraschino cherries dotted thickly over the top and well mixed with mayonnaise.

A separate dish of mayonnaise should be passed with most molded salads, as it is not easy to get enough dressing without destroying the appearance of the farm.

Another appetizing effect is had by using a round ring mold and filling the centre with a fancy mold that fits closely and is much higher. Thus a cucumber aspic in the ring can have halibut or salmon salad arranged in the fancy form that fits closely in the ring when turned out. If halibut is used, mixed with shredded green peppers and olives for color, or the sweet red peppers finely chopped.

This arrangement is equally attractive for dessert, this ring being of ice cream and the centre of wine jelly. A simpler dessert might have the outer ring of chocolate blanc mange, with nuts mixed through it, the fancy form being filled with whipped cream. This may be slightly stiffened with gelatine if it will not hold its shape.

Nothing is prettier than a round or oval ring mold of French vanilla ice cream heaped high with fruit in season. Strawberries, raspberries, peaches, oranges and bananas. Home-made ice cream served in this way has all the air of a novelty dessert. For further adornment whipped cream may be put on the top of fruit through a tube to make fancy forms.

Spring Papers

If you are to paper a country house consider the papers that look like old chintzes. Never have these been lovelier, and, if correctly treated, they rarely fail to please.

Do not use an overlarge design unless the ceilings are extra high and the room spacious; otherwise there is a smothered sensation that is not restful. Oddly, though, an extra large room does not look well with a chintz wall covering; there is too much of it. A better treatment in this case would be a frieze of the chintz combined with a white striped paper or with one in a delicate tint of the dominant tone of the border.

With the return to early Victorian fashions comes a revival of the panelled room. It is in favor, especially for country houses. Expensive papers have specially decorated panels, but good effects can be obtained by papering with a plain, striped or diapered paper and arranging flowered borders of any desired width in regular panels, according to shape of room.

Another interesting wall treatment is copying old Japanese designs from screens and panels.

For summer homes coolness must be sought. In bedrooms this is best obtained by selecting white or cream papers in satin stripes or figures in the same tone, using with it a gay border.

Never have these borders been more artistic or so varied in width. Some are little more than bindings in color, others two or three inches in bowknot or floral designs; still others ten inches deep, with gay paroquets with spreading tails.

Attractive is the border of festooned sweet peas in shades of rose color or violet, while very cool is a garland of green leaves caught at intervals with tight little bunches of violets, roses or nasturtiums.

The cut-out border is in greater favor than the one with a straight edge. Expense can be lessened if this cutting is done before the paperhanger arrives.

About Gowns and Bonnets and Other Things

The powers that rule in Fashionland have lately considered the middleaged woman.

This season the younger generation will take a lesson from their elder friends in the art of looking graceful in draped frocks, jacket bodices, mantles and other styles which they have never seen before.

Nothing is more lovely than a woman whose hair is tinged with gray or "crowned with snow" if she is becomingly gowned.

This season's fashions are made for her also. "A woman is as old as she looks" was never so great a truth as it is to-day.

The sombre tones of color, so rich and "different," captivate every one, young and old. Dark rich wine colors, dull brown, mauves, taupe, dull blues—all are appropriate for the older matron.

Redfern shows a stunning model of dark rose-colored taffeta. It appears centuries old, borrowed from some ancient painting.

The bodice is rather severely plain, enlivened only by an old English lace collar. Scalloped ruffles finish the sleeves, falling well over the hands.

The skirt is slightly full and trimmed with four scalloped flounces. These are embroidered in all the tints of rose silk. Beneath the lace collar a bow of black velvet gives the touch of the artistic.

Panier Skirt is Newest.

For once Paris dressmakers, it seems, acknowledge their inability to decide just what the correct outline of the woman of to-day shall be. A change is due, assuredly, but several attempts to thrust the opposite extreme of wide skirts, hoop-skirts, etc., have been unsuccessful.

The woman of fashion persistently clings to the clinging skirt, so the fashion makers have accomplished a compromise. The clinging foundation skirt is retained, and the change of outline is effected with panniers.

They are a revival of a mode that ran high in the period of Louis XV., but the panniers of those days recorded by the paintings of Watteau, Boucher, and Chardin are so modified and adapted to our own times that they may with justice be termed the pannier of 1912.

The new panniers are so varied in style and adjustment that one sees instinctively that any type, or, in fact, any weight, of woman may wear them with impunity.

There is one that resembles closely the late unlamented hobble, but three are others draped low down and close over little tight underskirts that keep the figure as slim and svelt as a willow wand.

Perhaps the most popular manifestation of the pannier is that approved by Paquin. It is shaped so as to reveal long-pointed V, which makes the over drapery becomingly lengthen, rather than shorten, the figure.

Modish Millinery.

Many of the newest hats are fashioned of petal straw, so called on account of its fineness and suppleness, and are bordered with a ribbon of straw or lined completely with velvet. Tegal, of course, keeps its place in favor, and is often lined with jedda or manila straw in a contrasting color.

Outdoor Furniture

Garden furniture of the modern sort looks well, is not expensive and will stand hard usage.

It is called garden furniture or lawn furniture or porch furniture, just as you please to designate it, for it is equally adaptable to garden, lawn or porch, or it can even be placed indoors if your house is a bungalow or a summer cottage of some other type.

The chief characteristic of this furniture, its ability to stand up under any punishment inflicted by the weather, qualifies it pre-eminently for service out in the open. It is perfectly good on the cottage porch, but not as good there as reed, wicker, willow or rattan, while there is nothing better for use under the trees or on the open stretches of lawn. Neither sun nor rain nor wind can harm it, and it fits in any landscape.

This out of door furniture is either portable on stationary. In the former class there are chairs and settees of innumerable designs, tables, flower stands, flower boxes, couches, tabourettes, Indian seats, lawn vases and so on. Among the stationary furnishings are large lawn seats, with or without canopies; swing stands and the swings themselves, summer houses, pergolas, fences, bridges, arbors and gates. It may be stretching it a trifle to call all these things furniture, but that is the custom in the trade, and the stationary pieces are found side by side with the portable in the stores and in the catalogues.

Hickory is one of the old staple woods of the genuine rustic furniture. Young hickory saplings are used for the framework. If cut in the fall the bark will always adhere to the wood, it is declared. For the backs and seats of chairs, settees and swings, the tough inner bark of the hickory is cut into long, thin strips, which are closely woven in the familiar over and under pattern. This kind of seating is tough and durable, but elastic and comfortable. There is no attempt to tamper with the natural beauty of the wood or to polish up or improve upon the attractive surface of the bark.

Red cedar is another wood much used for rustic furniture. The rather soft, long shaggy bark is left untouched, but much of it adheres to the wood so loosely that it must wear away after a while. The cedar generally selected is of the variety with a conspicuous red heart in the centre of the stick, showing in the furniture where the ends are rounded off on chair arms and backs.

What is said to be the root of this same red heart cedar tree is used for another style of the garden furniture, but under the name of laurel wood. It is hard and gnarly, full of sharp curves and bulging knots and in general has a rather uncomfortable look in the chair backs. There is on attempt to use it for seats; hard smooth slats are used.

Another attractive native wood for the out of door furniture is birch in any of its common varieties. Pretty effects are produced by using two or more varieties in the same piece with one kind for the general framework and another for the upright slats of a settee, for instance.

There is still one more style of garden furniture not quite so rustic perhaps, but equally suitable for many country places, especially those laid out on formal lines. It is of cypress sawed and planed down into conventional forms and painted. It has a style all its own, with little attempt at ornamentation, but with graceful outlines and well calculated proportions.

None of the garden or lawn furniture is upholstered, but cushions for chairs, settees and swings can be made with some of the many sunfast fabrics now to be had in a great variety of colorings and designs.

Bridesmaids' Gowns.

At one of the fashionable weddings recently the eight bridesmaids wore gowns of graduated shades of pink, producing a most artistic effect. The first two in line were gowned in bright cerise, with satin bandeaus around the hair, of the same brilliant color, finished at the back with tall upstanding bows of white tulle. The next two wore gowns of a lighter tint of rose, with the same graceful headdress, and so on down the line, each couple wearing gowns and accessories of a paler tint, until the color melted and was lost in the exquisite white gown of white chiffon radium worn by the matron and maid of honor.

The gowns were in pannier style, raffled with tulle and finished at the throat with fichus of shadow lace. Pink sweet peas were carried, beginning with the vivid rose and shading down to the palest tint, until the last couple carried great bunches of pure white.

The delicate shading of color and the airy headdresses gave the wedding party the appearance of a mass of gorgeous butterflies poised for flight. The youthful bride, the daughter of Senator Fletcher, of Florida, wore a gown of ivory satin and tulle, embroidered in seed pearls in a design of lilies of the valley.

Vacations for Everybody.

In an article on vacations in the May Woman's Home Companion, the author says in part:

"Horace Greeley said he had been twenty years trying to find time to go a-fishing, and a few years later he died from overwork and anxiety. Many a farmer lives all his life within sight of running streams, or within sound of babbling brooks, and the suggestion that he hang up his hoe and go a-fishing never reaches him. Thoreau says, 'the better part of man is soon plowed into the soil as compost'; and I have known some such lives. I knew a woman who put her babies in a barrel and left them while she worked in the field with her husband. Together they paid off the farm mortgage and then bought more farms and paid off more mortgages. They never took vacations. Neither of them ever saw a train of cars until the iron rails were laid through their own lands, and when the first train passed through, the old lady was heard to say, 'Well, I have worked hard all my life, but now I shall have 't easy. I can just sit and milk and see the cars go by.'

"Another family of my acquaintance, living on a large farm, with fifty cows to milk and care for, and 500 hens to look after, finds time every year for an outing; rather, they hire extra help on the farm and take the time, and they do not take the time grudgingly either. They figure that what the outing costs is the best investment of the whole year."